

Chinese Confucian Christians: A Blended, Nuclear Identity in North America

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Abstract

Despite difficulties faced by immigrants or trans-nationals in their adaptation to North American society, a significant number of those in Chinese communities in the States have overcome stress related to discrimination (or the existence of a *glass ceiling*) with an ingenious paradigm for identity construction. This particular identity (Chinese Christian Confucian Identity or CCCI) provides participants with a paradigm for an identity construction which is family oriented and which often seems to show convergence between Christian and Confucian notions such as the following: *Xiao* (filial piety), *Tian* (heaven) and *Ren* or *Ren-ai* (love and respect). This convergence has allowed members of Chinese American Christian churches to build a framework for self-actualization. The *nucleus* or socio-motivational center for this identity is in fact the *Ren* or *Ren-ai*. The *ren-ai* is embedded in the construction of the identity and uncovered through IMIS (Multistad Investigator of Social Identity) analysis. The identities analyzed did not show signs of distress. 26 of the 34 analyzed showed contiguity between the different spheres of the identity. This seems to indicate that they are *harmonious* or *sound* identities.

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The identity *nucleus* can also be termed the *socio-motivational center* (Zavalloni, 1984, Martinez, 1999). It is the *identity word or nucleus* which emerges through analysis of the social microcosms, cultural spheres, and moral emotional spheres of the IMIS participants. The *Ren-ai* as analysed in the CCC identity is *humanity* in the Confucian sense, but is more than that, in that it is also comprised of the love of Christ and of others in the Christian sense. It can be called respect, it can be termed affect, it is also about giving of self. This study did not compare love or *ren-ai* as it is practiced in White, Black or Hispanic Christian identities, though it seems that it is most likely central to the Christian identity, and could possibly be a *nucleus* or *socio-motivational center* for White, Black, or Hispanic Christian identities. An analysis of these identities using similar methods used in this study could prove quite interesting for future research.

In the analysis of CCCI IMIS social microcosms, cultural and moral/emotional spheres; we see

that *Ren-ai* is put into praxis or actualized through helpfulness and kindness toward others and through the hospitality, generosity and mercy/compassion shown by the participants in the study as per their representations¹. The identity is not at all individualistic. The value of the *person* is strongly emphasized, however. Inner harmony or *psycho-social equilibrium* is achieved through the *gift of self* and warm relationships with others. The CCC personally seeks to find intimacy with *Tianzhu/Shangdi* (God) through the *Ren-agape* in order to bring about effective peace and joy. The CCCI seeks in some ways to revitalize the theism and humanity in Chinese culture, return to familial or ancestral roots (the *gen*) and find social and personal fulfillment through the Christian *family* and the transcendent relationship with God. The people involved in the construction of this identity may fall short in their ideal, as all identities have their shortcomings (we did see some frustration, necessary defense mechanisms and some relational conflicts for 7 of the 34 IMIS subjects), but analysis of the CCC social microcosms, cultural spheres, and contiguity in the moral emotional spheres seems to show a very positive and a very sound identity construction.

II. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1. In this study, I seek to discover the main components of Chinese Christian identity in North America. I also seek to measure integration and the solidity of the identity constructed. The study itself was composed of three phases: a preliminary questionnaire phase, a focus group phase (structured interviews and group discussions), psycho-social analysis. This latter phase involved analysis of participant representations for various different social categories. A social microcosm takes shape for each participant and is then analyzed in order to determine whether or not the identity is well integrated (and in order to discover the person's motivational dynamic.)

III. CHINESE CONFUCIAN CHRISTIANS: A BLENDED, NUCLEAR IDENTITY IN NORTH AMERICA

Identity construction has become increasingly complicated with the rapid globalization of its different components including social, cultural, and religious aspects of identity. According to Jean-Claude Guillebaud, in his thesis on the globalization of our world,² people's religious identities in Asia, Africa, and Latin America have become increasingly complex and changing. After sixty years of communism and official atheism in China, for example, the demand for things spiritual is

1 I refer again here to the sample of the analysis of the moral emotional sphere of one IMIS participant's identity given as an example in the appendices. This identity is particularly representative of the 27 out of 34 participants who all showed relatively integrated identities. I feel again that even those who did show use of defense mechanisms due to severe stress also showed relatively integrated identities.

2 Guillebaud, Jean-Claude; *Le Commencement d'un Monde*, Seuil, 2008

significant.³ In 2006, the US State Department estimated the number of Protestant Christians in China (both official and clandestine) to be close to 100 million (Calvinists, Evangelicals, Charismatics, historical Protestants).⁴ They make up perhaps 1.2 % of the population in China. At the same time, Guillebaud estimates the number of Catholics (of both the official and clandestine churches) to have increased to approximately 14 million.⁵ One cannot be certain of the exact statistics, or the numbers concerning clandestine churches, but these statistics seem to confirm Chen's assertion that Christian conversion is rising in Asian countries like China and Korea.⁶

What is the situation regarding conversion and Christianity among Asian and particularly Chinese Americans in the diaspora? How has the globalization of religion and religious concepts affected identity construction in North America? What is most important in the construction of Chinese Christian American identities, for example?

In examining the identity construction of Chinese Americans, one finds that quite a few immigrants in North America become Christians (particularly those from Taiwan and many from mainland China). Korean immigrants are also converting to Christianity in rather large numbers. A 1997 survey of Chinese living in the LA area found that 32% consider themselves to be Protestant Christians.⁷ Many experienced conversion in the States following immigration.⁸ We can compare this figure with a 1997-98 survey which shows that 79% of Korean Americans consider themselves to be Christian.⁹ This number is close to the general figure given for the overall number of people who consider themselves religious in the U.S (86%.)¹⁰

IV. SOCIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL THEORY/REPRESENTATIONS

Prior to describing the study in-depth, I will give a short overview of some ideas or theories which form the basis for the methods employed. Following the section on theory, methods and samples will be discussed. In the last section of this paper, a synthesis of results is given and conclusions are drawn.

3 Benoit Vermandeer, director of the Ricci Institute, Taipei as cited in Guillebaud *ibid.* p. 218

4 Guillebaud, *ibid.* p. 217

5 Guillebaud, *ibid.* p. 217

6 Chen, Carolyn: *Getting Saved in America*, Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 60

7 Dart cf: Chen, Carolyn: *Getting Saved in America*, Princeton University Press, 2008 p.27, see also: Yang Fenggang (1999), Yang and Carnes (2004) Also see: 1997 *Los Angeles Times* survey

8 Daban, Mary, *Chinese Christians in North America*, Tripod (Kin Kwok Printing Press, Hong Kong, China) vol. XXIV-N?135, Winter 2004

9 Min 2002 cf: Yang and Carnes: *Asian American Religions: The Making and Remaking of Borders and Boundaries*, New York University Press, 2004, p48

10 Pei-te Lien and Tony Carnes: *The Religious Demography of Asian American Boundary Crossing*; in Yang and Carnes, 2004

Identity construction as described by Eric Erikson (cf. Tian Guang) informs us of the essential quality of the person. It is a quality which is subjective, while at the same time, observable. Tian Guang, in his study of Chinese Canadian identity construction, quotes Donnelly in regards to sociological observation noting the advantage for the sociologist who has *an insider's* understanding of the sociological phenomenon being observed. While employing sociological or psycho-social tools of investigation and scientific theories, one is helped if one holds an interior, personal experience of an aspect of the phenomenon observed. Yet, when explaining the analysis of religious phenomenon (in France as in the States) it is perhaps helpful to note that in the academic world, meaning can sometimes be misconstrued. Despite an increased openness and interest in things religious, in the academy one often notes that: *just below the surface...there abides a tenacious anti-religious sentiment*¹¹ Analysis of identity construction is, of course, subjective up to a point. Even so, an approach which attempts to understand the philosophical and motivational dynamic of identity seems to allow for a deeper comprehension of identity formation. A multi-disciplinary approach to the analysis of identity construction was preferred for this particular study. Disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, or psycho-sociology offer theories and methods which when combined, allow for a holistic understanding of identity construction. Devereux (1967:XVI) has mentioned that despite the possibility of counter-transfer or influence in terms of data results, the researcher can use this counter transfer data in order to better understand behavior. This phenomenon seems to allow for increased understanding of human nature¹².

In this study, I sought to verify whether or not the Christian religion had a strong correlation with harmony for the Chinese American Christian. Was harmony indeed a part of this identity construction as present in the cultural, social, personal, and psycho-social spheres of the participants lives? Was it likely that conservation of traditional Chinese culture (perhaps Confucian values) remained an important factor in social, cultural, and personal equilibrium? Was affection or human warmth present in the *ren* (humanity/respect/love) that participants in the first phase of the study noted as being important to their identity? Does the *ren* allow the person to forge unity and harmony in Chinese American Christian communities? Empirical studies have of course shown that the Christian church can serve as an institution favoring immigrant integration and is at the same time a bastion for preserving certain aspects of traditional culture¹³. It is important to understand

11 Smith, Christian 2003 cf. Yang and Carnes, 2004

12 Devereux cf. Tian Guang

13 Yang, 1999 p31

church context then, if one is to understand the praxis of *ren* and its relationship to harmony as an aspect of the identity.

In terms of the theory of representations, I refer to Dr. Farr's analysis of studies undertaken by the Chicago School of the 1920s. Thompson and Yeck's study, for example, concluded that the social representations, collective and social attitudes of Polish farmers immigrating to the States and those remaining in Poland, were the same¹⁴. These results contrasted with those of different immigrant groups living in Chicago. The Chicago School in the 1920s used sociological and psychological methods to study identity with successful results. Social representations theory is still used when studying national communities who have shared or collective values (The Italians and Brazilians, for example). Farr suggests that Scandinavians and North Americans seem to be more critical of a theory which seeks to give a global view of human thought as it is perhaps not operationally defined in an in-depth fashion.

What is interesting about social representations theory is that one can emphasize situations which determine behavior and conduct experiments such as those conducted by Sandra Jovchelovitch in her study of the health beliefs of Chinese immigrants in England.¹⁵ Her focus groups allowed her to obtain a model of the person within his or her environment. The person is also a source of change and not only a reproduction of the society. (This idea is in accord with macro-determinists such as Durkheim)¹⁶. This multi-disciplinary theory has us understand participants within the church environment as being part of *an ecological niche* according to Zavalloni. Moscovici feels that, the mind must be analyzed in concert with culture. Information in society, representations of the world, and feelings are all important to this theory. Gathering data also involves both quantitative and qualitative collection. However, social representations theory calls in particular for more qualitative research. This is because social representations require interface between object and subject, between image and meaning, between sociology, psychology, history of philosophy and thought, culture, and religion. Social representations cannot be reduced to only psychic phenomenon or simply cultural or ideological phenomenon.¹⁷

The social representations of church members, pastors and priests in this study, are, according to Farr, not simply mental traces of reality. They allow us to understand the selection made by participants in the process of identity construction. Participant representations also have sociological

14 Dr. Robert Farr : conference at the London School of Economics, winter-spring 1997

15 Jovchelovitch, 1998

16 Farr, 1997

status for Durkehim who noted that immigrant representations can be studied in much the same way that anthropologists study rites and myths in a given community. Representations orient peoples' communication, form the basis for their behavior and are an intimate part of the person's praxis. They help us to understand meaning as understood by different communities and in this way are more scientific than concepts such as individual imagination, cultural images, collective beliefs, or myths, or mentalities ¹⁸.

In this study, in order to have a more structuralist vision of the social representation, I tried to distinguish between elements central to the identity and those more peripheral in order to uncover the *noyau structurant*; the *central structuring feature* of the identity ¹⁹. *In operational terms, we search for the element whose absence would change the meaning of the representation or cause disarticulation within the structure of the representation.* This structural center or *nucleus* of the identity forms a bridge with other elements of the identity. It is the unifying and stabilizing element of the identity which organize the personality. This *nucleus* or central element of the identity gives meaning to the other elements and defines the primordial identity of the person, whether it be Chinese, Christian, American, etc. In fact, we found that when a person from China becomes Christian, Confucian thought or praxis and certain traditional values move slightly to the periphery as the nucleus grows into a different structured center. According to Durkheim, one can conclude that collective representations are logical and reflect real experience. A religious belief can at times be grounded in the imagination, but is more often based on life observations and human experience of reality ²⁰.

In her study of Chinese communities in England, Jovchelovitch noted how identities were negotiated in the diaspora. Through her analysis of the health representations of persons in the community, she noted the importance of the notion of harmony: “*Balance and harmony are basic to health not only within the body but also in social relations, in relation with the landscape and nature and in relations with the supernatural*” ²¹.

During the interviews I conducted with church members, certain aspects of Confucian thought and praxis were revealed including: 1. the importance of family and warm relationships 2. a culture marked by the importance of morality and self-restraint 4.education, work and success. The family

17 See: *Les Représentations Sociales*, D. Jodelet 1989, p 54

18 Jodelet, 1989, p 61- 62

19 Jodelet, 1989, p 72

20 Moscovici cf Jodelet 1989, p.83

21 Anderson 1987:33 cf:Jovchelovitch p.32

in particular was foundational in the lives of participants, though at times, the sense of family seemed to differ in some respects from the Confucian ideal. Nevertheless, obligation to and responsibility towards family members (and church in the sense of the wider family) were an essential factor structuring social relations and identity. Through their representations, participants in the study provided me with important information which allowed me to conduct further research in the third phase of the study.

V. EGO-ECOLOGY AND THE MULTISTAD INVESTIGATOR OF SOCIAL IDENTITY (*IMIS*)

Marisa Zavalloni's theory of ego-ecology was instrumental in understanding the profound structure of participant identity; the nature of the self and how each person experiences his relationships²². Image and affect are essential in understanding social identity; (the place where a person's social reality and psychology meet). The underlying meaning of the images given by the participants after they had written down their representations allowed access to the nature of this identity.

Zavalloni tells us that identity is inseparable from belonging. It is in belonging that the individual or group interprets reality. It necessarily involves the structures of *being* and *being together* and determines a person's representations and actions. For Zavalloni, the different actors who forge the identity are Self, Others (role models, friends or even enemies) and Society. In this theory Zavalloni shows us that in order to conduct concrete analysis of the identity, it is important to discover the images and concepts under the surface structure of the representation. These provide data which reveal the logic subordinate to and essential to the profound structure of the identity. According to Zavalloni, they link a person's world vision to his existential project. This can be determined through analysis, despite the fact that the person might be consciously unaware of his existential project and particular social perceptions²³.

Alain Touraine also noted how mastering the cultural sphere allowed one to harness reality and deal with the ever present conflicts which affect our post-industrial society.²⁴. Through the application of Zavalloni's method, I sought not only to reproduce daily discourse as symbolic interactionists do, but also to show the mental context of the person (images, memories, judgments) which provided me with a certain insight into the subconscious sphere of the Chinese American Christian social identity. Cognition and affectivity in socio-historical situations and individual response to

22 *Identité Sociale et Conscience*, Zavalloni Marisa, Université de Montréal, 1984: p8

23 Zavalloni p.9

24 Touraine cf. Zavalloni, p.16

these situations are the focus of Zavalloni's theory. Self, Others and Society are the basis for the psycho-social identity and analysis of their relationships allows one to determine whether or not the identity is integrated, whether or not it is harmoniously constructed.

What is the experienced context and the images which come to mind for participants when evoking the different categories of social identity? How to decode them and what prototypes do the participants have which motivate them existentially (and which tend to determine their relationship between the real and the ideal)? How do these prototypes or life models help in the identity construction process and affect the person's vision of the social world (social microcosm)?²⁵. What are the systems of differentiation or binary oppositions between Self and Non-self (both positive and negative) (We refer here to the quadrants wherein the individual writes down his representations).

Self +

Elements appreciated and shared with the group one belongs to

Non Self +

The ideal register: desires and aspirations

Self -

Elements of the self which are not appreciated: faults, deficiencies

Non Self-

Negative aspects of the surrounding environment

For each identity which is cherished or despised by the participant, there is a diametrically opposed *other*. In analysis, one notes whether or not there are relations of contiguity or of incompatibility; or whether or not there is opposition, an antithetic (tolerant/intolerant) or antagonistic (dominated/dominating) relationship, complementarity relationships or relationships of differentiation. Relationships with the Other (Alter ego) can bring about functional or dysfunctional relationships with the Self (leading to frustration or gratification or constituting a menace to the person). If a sense of inferiority or major incapacity is indicated this could reveal intense conflict accompanied by a defense mechanism (in order to minimize the negative element). If in this case, defense mechanisms are lacking, the identity could be undergoing significant distress (ex: in the case of a feeling of loss or of marginalization or discrimination (of external origin). Zavalloni indicates whether or not there is neurosis (internal origins of the distress) or hostility or revolt if the distress is of external origin. A person can choose either positive, adaptive responses or defensive responses when confronted with these situations (defensive negative) responses could

include: aggression against the aggressor, emotional explosion or self destruction, etc.)²⁶. If there is alienation, the participant could be looking for other values or be soul searching. According to Zavalloni, those who live in harmony with their group are in general happier and less insecure than those living individualistic lifestyles. Alienation can be overcome through creation. For the Chinese Christian in the States, the creation of the *new man* or the *new birth* is a solution which resolves identity conflicts.

The positive advantage of analyzing participant discourse is that: Use of a subject's discourse in order to explore the semantic and affective aspects of group representations allows one access to deeper meaning underlying representations. Access to this meaning is the principal obstacle for the classic quantitative approach.²⁷

Methods and Samples

When choosing appropriate methods for this study, I referred to studies by Tian, Yang, Jovchelovitch, Zavalloni and others. Methods included: structured interviews, questionnaires, participation and observation (ethnographic methods), focus groups, and the IMIS tool. Phase 1: The preliminary questionnaire allowed me to bring out principal elements of the identity present in various categories (daily lifestyle/adaptation, family values/relationships, religious values/relationships, prototypes or identity models, socio-economic information, outreach activities, educational background, philosophy, other values.) Phase 2: The focus group allowed me to understand group relationships, existential issues of groups, group and individual values, collective representations etc. Phase 3: This phase involved analysis of the psycho-social identity in order to determine adaptation, and integration of participant identities.

Phase One: the preliminary questionnaire

In 2001, questionnaires were sent to various churches in different cities in North America: the San Francisco Bay Area, San Diego, Houston, Toronto, Madison WI, Ohio, Chicago, Los Angeles, Vancouver, etc. Responses to this questionnaire are printed on the questionnaire form found in the appendices of the original dissertation. Of the 600 preliminary questionnaires sent out in 1999-2000, 148 (21%) were returned. The respondents reflected the variety of origins of Chinese immigrating to North America. Most participants came from: Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong

²⁶ *ibid.* p.130-131

Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines.

Analysis of the preliminary questionnaire provided partial confirmation of what I had begun to discover in the literature review of Confucian and Christian notions (which seemed to show some convergence between the two).²⁸ Questionnaires were sent to pastors and priests who then distributed them to parishioners. Others were sent to church members by electronic mail (and in particular, through an on-line Chinese American Christian organization). A Chinese Catholic mission group in the States also distributed a significant number of questionnaires. The questionnaire itself was in English, although a Chinese questionnaire was made available to those who requested it (54 respondents).

Through this questionnaire, it became possible to evaluate the quality of the participants' religious practices through the self-reporting technique. Most respondents were inspired by, though not entirely satisfied with: their prayer life, Biblical reading, Bible sharing or prayer groups. The existential motivation was strong and involved continually seeking to increase the quality of relationships in the different spheres of the identity. The results enabled me to measure the person's adaptation in terms of social and religious/existential identity and gave an indication of identity and cultural integration. The questions concerned both ethnic and Christian identity.²⁹ The questionnaire was quantitative, while at the same time, allowed for open-ended reflection on existential and family projects for the person's future life, indication of prototypical images, description of cultural and religious representations, etc.

Respondents to the questionnaire held the following characteristics: 74 were men and 74 were

27 We refer to Collin's study of the Inuit population cf. Zavalloni p.198

28 Berthrong, John H.: *All under Heaven; Transforming Paradigms in Confucian-Christian Dialogue*, State University of New York Press, 1994, Song, C.S.: *Jesus and the Reign of God*, Fortress Press, MN, Peter Chen Main Wang as cited in Vermandeer, Bays, Daniel H: *Christianity in China, From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Stanford University Press, 1996, Chan, Sharon Wai-Man: "The Dynamics of Expansion of the Chinese Churches in the Los Angeles Basin": in fulfillment of Dr of Philosophy Degree in Intercultural Studies at Fuller Seminary, January, 1996, Chan, Wing-tsit (Professor of Chinese Culture and Philosophy, Dartmouth College): *Religious Trends in Modern China*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1953, Ching, Julia: *Confucianism and Christianity*, Ricci, Matteo S.J.: *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (T'ien-chu Shih-i)*, Institute of Jesuit Sources, St Louis University, co-published by the Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies, Taipei, Taiwan, Saeki, P.Y. (prof. Waseda Univ, Tokyo) *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China*, The Toho Bunkwa Gakuin: The Academy of Oriental Culture Tokyo Institute, Maruzen Co. LTD Tokyo, 1951, Lee, Peter K.H. "A Confucian-Christian Dialogue: Liberating Life as a Commitment to Truth" *Ching Feng* 33:3, September, 1990, Legge, James: *Translations of the Classics: Confucius/Mencius: Sacred Books of China* (Dehli) : *The Shuking, The Shiking, The HsiaoKing., Doctrine of the Mean (Jung Yung)*", *Confucian Analects (Lun Yu)*, Fong, Pauline: *Lives Touched and Changed by God, a Visit to Three Mainland Chinese Churches in LA*, First Evangelical Association Bulletin, June 1998, Cheng, Anne: *Histoire de la pensée chinoise*, Seuil, 1997, etc.

29 A synthesis of conversion stories is given in the appendices to the original dissertation

women, 44 were 35 or younger, 42 were between 35 and 45, 25 were between 56 and 65, and 22 people were 65 or older. Some respondents did not indicate their age. Respondents not only reflected the wide variety of origins of Chinese coming to North America, they also reflected the wide variety of ethnic Chinese churches or parishes. We can assume then that Chinese Christians in North America show an equal representation of men and women and that a large majority are active in their professions, in their family lives, church, and community.

Other demographic characteristics of preliminary questionnaire respondents: 99 lived in the western half of the US and 95 in California. 38 came from Canada: Toronto and Vancouver. Only 12 respondents lived in the Midwest. Demographic statistics show that most Chinese American Christians live in the large cities of the east and west coasts with many in Houston also³⁰ According to Sharon Chan, there are, for example, many Chinese churches expanding in the Los Angeles area which confirmed information gleaned through structured interviews with Chinese American pastors and priests regarding church growth in the LA basin, Houston, Dallas, New York, and Toronto (though very few of our respondents came from the East coast, apart from from Toronto). Some church members from New York and Boston that I communicated with over the phone were more reluctant to fill out the questionnaire. This was not the case for members from Toronto or Vancouver.

97 of the respondents were married, 34 were single and 9 were divorced. These figures seem to support the idea of the importance of family harmony in Chinese American Christian communities. A Chinese Catholic nun in the San Francisco Bay area mentioned that in her work with Chinese immigrants in Chinatown, many come to her with family problems. We can assume that this might rarely be the case for Chinese American Christians. Many respondents also had children: 25 had one child, 32 had two children, 3 people had more than five children. Other respondents did not answer this question. We can also assume that the fact that 2/3 of the respondents are married and have never divorced might also be an indication of the importance of family harmony. These figures vary significantly from national averages concerning marriage and divorce. Both the Evangelical Christian, the Catholic magisterium, and the Confucian ethic see family unity and respect as being of utmost importance.

Demographics from this study's respondents confirmed findings from other studies.³¹ Most questionnaire respondents were first generation Chinese American. Many were born in mainland

30 Yang and Carnes, 2004

China or Taiwan: 105 spoke Mandarin and 57 Cantonese. The figures differ then from those in Britain where a majority of Chinese immigrants come from Hong Kong (and speak Cantonese).³² Although we also had respondents from Hong Kong in this phase of the study. As in phase 2 and 3 of our study, a large majority of the preliminary questionnaire respondents were well educated (Chan, 1995)³³ 98 spoke English in addition to Mandarin or Cantonese. 125 out of 149 had received university diplomas and half of this number had earned Masters or PhD degrees. Most in our sample preferred the sciences and other “pragmatic” sorts of professions: 16 engineers, 3 PhD candidates, 6 scientists, 3 doctors, 8 university professors, 6 pastors or priests including one bishop, 7 chemists, 6 managers, 2 in IT, 1 pharmacist, etc. Some respondents did not wish to mention their profession. Some respondents were ABC (American Born Chinese) and a very few came from working class families.

The majority of our respondents felt that they were more or less apolitical. 34 considered themselves to be conservative and 19 had voted for the democratic party. However, all respondents mentioned the importance of strong moral standards. In her work, Anne Cheng (1997) has noted that “*l’harmonie sous le Ciel*”³⁴ or “harmony under heaven” is important and this includes the importance of having high moral values (which allow one to live in harmony with others). The person's focus is not on the self or the individual, but on others.) Vermandeer has also noted the importance of moral values in terms of Christianity and its ability to “converge with Chinese cultural thinking”. In terms of the conversion experience, 71 respondents have been Christian for less than 10 years (see also Yang, 1999). 103 were Protestants, 11 Catholic and the remainder Anglican. The Chinese American Christian identity seems to be well integrated in terms of professional, educational, and other categories of the social identity.

Overall, demographic characteristics showed a correlation with the identity constructed, and Christian religion was shown to have high correlation with “harmony” or peace in the person's life (we refer here to quotes in this section and in the synthesis of open ended questions in the original dissertation). Chinese traditional culture was also seen to have a significant correlation with harmony, although perhaps in a different fashion. Was this “harmony” in correlation with the person's psycho-social equilibrium? We examine this question in phase 3 of the study. The Christian religion seems to have a strong, positive influence in the person's family life: For this question (No.9) 112 of 149 answered the question positively: “*Makes my family more lovely, more peaceful*”.

31 US Census Bureau statistics: PLee p1, see also Yang Fenggang, 1999

32 Jovchelovitch *ibid*.

33 Sharon Chan, 1996

Family values seem to be central to this identity and to identity construction. Of those who were in agreement with the values listed in question 15 of the questionnaire: 127 feel monogamy to be important, 128 show a strong attachment to the institution of marriage, 139 mention family loyalty, 114 feel it is important to be chaste prior to marriage, 132 emphasize the importance of having peace in all relationships, 104 feel it is important to obey parents (others felt that this, of course, depends on age and circumstance).

Answers to question 33 mentioned Christianity as being the most important element in their identity (68 of the 148 respondents), and family was the second most important element. Others placed Confucian principles in 4th position, followed by collective and then cultural aspects of their identity. Being “Chinese” was quite positive for the person in terms of his primordial identity and this convergence between the two aspects is notable. Elements which have had a negative impact on respondents identities include racism (19 respondents), linguistic difficulties (19 respondents), and secular culture (20 respondents)

“The act of immigration had moderate impact on my identity, Also there were times that secular values edged into my life and caused confusion and frustration.”

“(it is important) getting changed from secular Chinese custom but not traditional Chinese culture”. (person from California)

In answer to question 40: “What has been most constructive of your selfhood”? 98 people mentioned that religion (Christianity) and the spiritual life was the most important factor in the construction of their social, cultural and personal identity, this was followed by personal success (25) and 33 also mentioned Chinese culture as being important, though not the most important, element in their identity construction.

“I am a Christian first in my identity, I want to express my Christian faith with Chinese cultural forms.” (person from the Midwest)

From these responses, we can deduce that Chinese culture (and in particular Confucian family values) as well as Christian traditional family values give a person the necessary elements for a positive and solid identity construction (in the eyes of the respondents). Christian spiritual life is the primordial element, as the respondents indicated. How this construction comes about, in what context and with what objective results were questions we sought to answer in phases 2 and 3 of the

study.³⁵ Participant answers to open-ended questions also gave us an indication of the context of the conversion experience. The transcendent experience of the love of God through relationships with others, the experience of love in the “extended “Christian family , in the participant's own family, and contact with Scripture brought about the conversion experience.

1. *“I was attracted by the love of Christians, then by the love of God (source of the former). Later on, convicted of my sin, I wanted to be saved.”*
2. *“I came to know Christ through my wife and brothers and sisters in a Chinese Bible study group. Their prayer and constant love led to the church, where Jesus showed me in my heart He is my Savior”.*
3. *“Encouraged by Christian friends. The experience of God to comfort me when I was in trouble and to answer my prayer.”*
4. *“Influenced by my wife and friends and teachers.”*
5. *“a. Drove my wife to church every Sunday. b. Sat outside to wait c. Sat at the back of the church to find out what was taught. d. Involved in church activities. e. Discuss with Christians and priests. f. Attend lessons (baptismal)”*
6. *“Because my priest helped me a lot while I was sick. The people in the church are very good to me.”*
7. *“Love of other Christians, the Bible.”*
8. *“I was influenced by a priest's way to treat people with love and compassion.”*

For other Chinese American Christian respondents, the love of God as experienced through Christian Scripture, or through church teaching in conjunction with positive relationships brought about conversion. Sometimes the person converted because of an existential dilemma which was resolved through conversion to Christianity.

1. *“Jesus touches my heart and I need His love.”*
2. *“I heard the Good news of God’s love for me. That He was willing to send His Son to die on the cross for my sin and redeem me back to be His child” (filial piety in the spiritual sense)*
3. *“I became a Christian because I marveled at how much God loves us and how much the saints love God. Selfless love in union with God, all of creation, past, present, and future is how I want to live.”*
11. 4. *“Before High School graduation I was moved by the great love of Jesus who died for our sins. I kneeled at the bed and recited the Rosary. I didn’t understand all then*
12. 5. *“The first time I heard about God I was attracted. I believed God is the truth.”*

35 See phase 3 of this study

As we have seen from analysis of the preliminary questionnaire,³⁶ Chinese Americans were found to have developed quite interesting paradigms in constructing what could be termed as a *Chinese Christian Confucian Identity* or *CCCI*. The church in its *familial* role assists immigrants in forming what we have analyzed as being positive social and cultural identities within the North American context (The church becomes the extended family of the CCC participants' own family as the person realizes he can choose to become a *child of God*). Participants' own families are important to them, and the extended church family also shows this strong sense of *Confucian- Christian* solidarity which differs greatly from the individualism permeating the wider American society as per participants' representations.³⁷ This seems to hold true as well for those of the second generation. A sense of respect found in Chinese ethnic church or ABC church relationships is generally seen to be different from individualism which is perceived as beginning to permeate White American Christian circles and which sometimes feels “narcissistic, pushy, inconsiderate”³⁸ In phases 2 and 3 of this study, we attempt to analyze whether or not it is indeed also convergence of Chinese (particularly Confucian) and Christian concepts which are influencing this identity construction and which allow CCC participants to develop a blended identity. Aspects of the identity are interrelated, nothing is lost, but there is the development or growth of a *nucleus* particular to this identity which enhances integration between the different elements of the CCCI. The nucleus is the center of the identity and the other elements are connected to it.

Phase two: sample for focus groups

Jovchelovitch's representations theory and focus group work inspired the second phase of the study. All group discussions were recorded and subsequently transcribed upon my return to France. The participants in this phase were representative of the general Chinese American population (representative also of its diversity). Demographics guided me in the selection of churches, in group formation, and also in the selection of participants for the third *IMIS* (Multistad Investigator of Social Identity) phase.³⁹ Participants were chosen in two of the principal zones of concentration of the Chinese American population: the San Francisco Bay area and the Los Angeles basin. There were 11 total focus groups. Two were held in France (Paris) and were socio-economically more diverse (in one Bible study, for example, a waitress and a factory worker prayed together with a

36 Please see the example of the questionnaire and related data in the Appendices of this paper

37 We refer here to quotes which indicate this in phase 2 of this paper.

38 This seems to confirm S.Park's analysis of Korean American youth preference for Korean style fellowship relationships cf. Yang and Carnes, 2004, p. 197. We refer also to *IMIS* representations in the *Non-Self* - quadrants including: *Not respectful, self-centered, too competitive*

39 Peter Lee's study of Chinese American youth: section on demographics, 1998. The diversity of focus group participants below seems comparable.

retired medical doctor and a the owner of an import/export business). Focus group participants were from diverse geographic regions including: mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam (Cholon), Indonesia. Some were American born Chinese (ABC) or American raised (ARC). Within each focus group, the ages were relatively homogenous (Some groups consisted of young professionals in their 20s, one group consisted largely of retired persons. However the majority of focus groups was made up of persons in their 40s from the following professions: teachers, pastors, social workers, doctors, engineers, lawyers, university professors, small business owners, researchers, a nutritionist, legal consultants, students, computer scientists, (public functionaries in a Chinese French focus group), a biochemist, an accountant, a librarian, a pharmacist, 2 housewives, a waitress, and a factory worker. Focus groups were held in the following churches and or homes of church members: Presbyterian (SF Bay area), Anglican (SF Bay area), a Catholic Bible sharing group in the Bay Area, a Catholic Church in the heart of San Francisco, a seminary in the outlying areas of SF, a Chinese Catholic center in the Los Angeles area, an Evangelical non-denominational church in Orange County, a Methodist Bible study in the LA basin, a Catholic School in an area near LA, a Catholic Bible sharing group a bit further out, and an Evangelical seminary in an area near Orange⁴⁰. Prior to or following focus group sessions, structured interviews were conducted with pastors and priests and a bishop in order to better understand the characteristics of the community. Focus groups allowed for a better understanding of: the phenomenon of integration, the daily lives of participants, important aspects of their spiritual lives (including conversion), and some similarities and differences between these churches and others in the wider American society.

Through the focus groups, data was gathered concerning faith, relationships, and values. Some interviews were conducted partially in Mandarin in order to reproduce the church environment and to discern different modes of communication and ways of relating. Some subjects required English in order to allow for greater understanding (on my part). Themes proposed included: the immigrant experience in the States, the dynamics of identity construction, integration, advantages and disadvantages in identity formation, general aspects of participant spirituality, impact of Christian faith on lifestyle, Christian practice, difficulties noted in identity construction (resources, family relationships etc.) what has been kept from Chinese culture, what has been rejected, what is gleaned from the new culture, what is rejected. We also suggested discussing similarities and differences between Confucian and Christian concepts in order to obtain the participants' own

⁴⁰ Exact names of Chinese churches participating in the focus groups are not mentioned in order to preserve participant confidentiality. The names of participants in the 3rd phase (the IMIS phase) of the study have also been changed to preserve confidentiality.

representations of these concepts. The social life of the church is, in a sense, reproduced in the group setting. Jovchelovitch recommends focus group methods in order to understand the more profound level of participant beliefs and experiences.⁴¹

Confucian and Christian terms discussed included: *Dao* (The Way) *Xiao* (Filial Piety), Buddhism, *Tian* (Heaven), *Ren* (an aspect of love, kindness, etc.). Other aspects of Confucian thought or American culture included: respect, education, and traditional Confucian praxis, Christianity, individualism, family relationships, the meaning of life, truth and liberty, eternal life. Through discussion we found a certain convergence between the Confucian ideal of harmony and the Christian notion of peace which was reflected in participants' day-to-day relationships. According to one participant *“The Chinese want to see how Christianity helps you in your daily life: Look at the first Christians, how they loved each other, no arguments, no disputes... In Chinese culture, (thus in Chinese Christian relationships) there is much respect for others. There is peace and harmony in this”*⁴². The notion of harmony was mentioned several times in the focus groups as was the importance of family, of God, of education, and the “*ren*” of love and “respect” (and in particular, respect for women):

1. *“Family, education, respect, and honesty are most important”*.
2. *“Family comes first, it is the center of life. We build our lives around the family.”*
3. *“Christian thought is attractive to people from Chinese culture, whereas Western thought and culture revolve around materialism, self-assertion, even aggression. These destroy our Christian virtue (and Chinese virtue) and are in opposition to Confucian thought. The Western focus on the self goes against Chinese or Christian focus on the family, solidarity. These conflicts tear us apart. This is particularly true for the second generation.”*
4. *“Kindness, respect, relationships are affected by individualism. Values are less important because the parents are too busy to correct their children, children are too independent. Both parents work to pay the bills and no one has time to think about God or have need of Christ. Those with cell phones or children with video games don't talk to each other at the dinner table, they don't share, they don't communicate. This is not good for the community. We are careless of the present... In China they didn't like communism and so turned toward religion, but they like consumerism, secular modernism.”*⁴³
5. *“The religion of Christ comes into each culture and integrates with that culture. Especially in Chinese culture.. there is emphasis placed on ren (love for others). We want to take care of*

41 Jovchelovitch, 1998

42 Chinese member of a Catholic church (San Francisco)

43 Chinese Catholic, San Francisco

children, of elderly people. There is harmony between culture and the Christian religion, a harmonious synthesis. This person is not dismembered as in capitalism."⁴⁴

6." *In terms of Chinese family pragmatism, we see that for many centuries prior to hearing about Christ there was much cruelty, much injustice, much suffering. Large families with multiple marriages caused great suffering. Could things continue in this way? There was no official slavery, but I'm sure there were suicides.*"⁴⁵

One member of a focus group converted to Christianity for the following reason:

"Confucian thought is that the woman is not important. I saw many women abused (in Asia). Even my colleague, her husband abused her. My aunt told me, 'This is your destiny, be patient, be tolerant.' I said 'Why?' I had read in the Bible that the woman should submit to the husband, so I didn't pay attention to the Bible at first. But it (the Bible) was the opposite of what I read in Chinese literature or in Shakespeare or in Hemingway. Something moved me in my reading of the Bible. What moved me was the unconditional love of Jesus, including his love for women. I didn't see any unconditional love in the literature. Someone in a Bible study asked me if I would believe in Jesus and I said yes."⁴⁶

Conversion to Christianity, according to participants, brought about harmony (cultural, familial, and spiritual) in their lives. Harmony seems to be a significant notion in traditional Chinese culture. In our literature review we examined Chinese writers' representations of harmony, of God, of eternity. Writer Liu Xiao Feng, for example, feels that the notion of *harmony* is an important aspect of life for Chinese. He notes in particular, the importance of studying the lives of Chinese poets and their much revered poetry. Poets seek harmony in verse. However Liu also sought answers as to why so many Chinese poets commit suicide (not only poets, but actors, actresses.. those with an artistic sensibility). He noted the existential quest taking place at this time in China and he concluded that the *ren* (love) and hope were lacking: *"The soul voyages as do the souls of poets like Libai (Tang dynasty). When the soul is empty (kongling), it seeks to renew ties with the other side.*"⁴⁷ A similar statement was made by a participant during our structured interviews in San Francisco: *"It is good to think about the other world. It gives you hope and energy. If you think of this world, there isn't much to think about. This world cannot satisfy. Theoretically, perhaps, the relational process in the world should satisfy, but practically, the atheist version of Confucianism cannot satisfy. Confucius*

44 Noted in a young couple's home where a focus group took place in the Bay Area (Bible Study)

45 Ibid. San Francisco Bay Area

46 Lawyer from a SF Bay Area focus group

47 Liu Xiao Feng *Zhen jiu yu /xiao yao*, 1988

gives a superior incentive, but how long can you hold out? Many say that they can, but they cannot.”

Much richness came from the diverse responses of focus group participants (which in turn, reflected the diversity of the groups themselves). The rich expression of the participants is perhaps also due to the diversity of the ethnic church membership of the participants: Presbyterian, Evangelical, non-denominational, Methodist, Anglican (Episcopalian), and Catholic. According to one bishop from San Francisco, despite diversity, there is a significant cohesiveness in identity formation and harmony in the church among those coming from different origins in the sinicized world.

Participants in the focus groups mentioned the importance of transmitting the *Dao* (the way) along with the *xiao* (filial piety in a spiritual sense) to their families. One member of a focus group in Chinatown (San Francisco) gave us another indication of this convergence:

Confucian teaching best represents Chinese culture. Christian faith does not contradict Chinese culture, it complements Chinese culture. If one loves his parents, he honours them. Jesus said do not forget your parents and take care of them (in Christ's discourse on Corban)⁴⁸ But Christ calls us to deny the self. Denying the self is a concept present in Confucian thought and in Christian thought.

Phase 3: IMIS (Multistad Investigator of Social Identity)

For this phase of the study, data was collected in three steps: 1. A structured questionnaire developed by Marisa Zavalloni⁴⁹, 2. Elucidation of meaning behind participant representations, 3. Graphics display of the interior operating environment which then provides each participant with an elementary space and social microcosm from which an “identity word” or “nucleus” can be uncovered.⁵⁰ Questions regarding the social microcosm then allow the researcher to understand underlying meaning behind participant representations. As my stay in California was not long enough to allow for more in-depth ethnographic studies, I asked participants to write down images that came to mind concerning the representations they had given. I then was able to do graphics display of the microcosm and analysis in France. If a participant had previously participated in a focus group, recordings of their participation were sometimes helpful in understanding the deeper meaning of the representations they often refer to. One then tries to conduct a global analysis of each subject's profile. Analysis of and synthesis of representational units (UR) is possible when the

48 Gospel of Mark 7:11

49 Please refer to an example of the Multistad Investigator of Social Identity (IMIS) in the appendices of this paper and to the above section on theory

associative network and socio-motivational “nuclei” have been revealed. When this took place, I was then able to understand certain tendencies in the moral, intellectual, and interpersonal, or cultural spheres. It is in each sphere that one can then analyze whether or not there are relationships of: contiguity, incompatibility, implication, opposition, complementarity (support), differentiation, frustration, etc.⁵¹

*“In his book “Beyond East and West”, John Wu’s thesis shows a correlation between Christian identity and Chinese cultural and philosophic identity. Wu suggests that integration of both results in an effective harmony.”*⁵² In many ways, the IMIS diagrams following analysis showed how Chinese American Christians do integrate Christian and Chinese philosophic and traditional cultural aspects. Only 7 of the 34 subjects showed any difficulty in achieving an integrated identity. Identity words and images for representational units (UR) are a good indication of this.⁵³ The integration of both cultural and philosophic aspects has allowed participants to regulate and attenuate identity conflicts in order to avoid sclerosis. This study verifies one hypothesis; the Chinese Christian church is a great help in the development of healthy identities. Common norms, models, behaviors and shared affect (“*warmth, love, kindness*”) participate in this identity construction. The church itself mediates in such a way that values do not conflict.

Analysis of the cognitive structure internal to each identity and its affective relational structure is fundamental to obtaining a deeper understanding of the person:”*Emotion and others are both essential in socialization and the construction of the personality (they provide) a sense of existence”*. GH Mead describes socialization as the construction of a social identity. It is the birth of self and mind in the heart of the society through interaction with others.”⁵⁴

VI. DYNAMICS OF THE SOCIO-MOTIVATIONAL NUCLEUS

The IMIS tool allows us to understand identity through the definition of relationships which are established in the different spheres of the identity. In the quadrants of the identity chart for each participant⁵⁵ certain representations (UR) reinforce each other. If for example in the positive quadrant of the self the person writes down representations such as: *Motivated* self+, another representation could reinforce this ex: *Ambitious*, self+. These show *Contiguity*. If two

50 We refer here to the social microcosm of IMIS participants in the original dissertation

51 Martinez, 1999 p.117

52 Gentleman from mainland China who has immigrated to San Francisco

53 Please see analysis of identity nuclei/identity words below below.

54 Martinez 1999, *ibid*.

representations (UR) mutually exclude each other (ex: *Hard worker*: self+ and *Lazy* self+, there is *Incompatibility*. (There was no incompatibility for participants in our sample). *Implication* occurs when actualization in one identity sphere brings about a negative outcome in another ex: *Success* self+ can imply *stress/nervousness* self-. (Implication was also rare in our sample.) *Binary Opposition* occurred at times, which, according to Zavalloni, is normal. Ex: values in the self+ were in opposition with negative values in the self-quadrant of the identity: *Kindness* self+ vs. *people who are self-centered* non-self- (the opposite quadrant where opposite relationships are indicated). *Antagonistic Relations* can occur (ex: dominated and dominating. These relationships can cause the person to develop defense mechanisms viewed as victimization or discrimination toward the self+) These were also rare in our sample. *Support*: indicates complimentary relationships: reinforcement, help, the Other (Non Self+) helps to mediate difficulties which may exist in the Self-. These were present in some of our IMIS identities, but we also saw: *Positive Differentiation* indicating gratification: what we appreciate and love in others. Sometimes this is a prototype, example or model for the person which is in the process of being actualized in his/her identity construction. *Negative Differentiation* can occur if the Other (Non-self -) is perceived as a victim or oppressed. The identity seeks to help that person. We did find this occurring in our sample as people in our sample sought to bring assistance to others (The Christian socio-motivational dynamic also influenced by the Confucian concept of humanity, indicating some Christian/Confucian convergence in the notion of the *ren-ai*). *Oppression-Agression* implies that there is aggressive action on the part of the Other (Non-self-) toward the Self+ (We did not find instances of oppression or aggression in our sample). Defense mechanisms can also allow one to use elements in the Self+ to minimize unfavorable elements in the self- and activate the positive aspects of the identity.

VII. *IDENTITY WORD or NUCLEUS*

The identity word discovered through analysis of participant discourse translates the person's self-actualization (who he/she is, who he wants to be, his emotional state and relational affect). We discover these words after having elaborated the interrelationships present in the identity network . In the original dissertation, we first presented the subject, then presented his *elementary space* , then his/her *social microcosm* (which is revealed through the representations given by the participant in the Self/Non-self quadrants.) We then analyze the relationships between the elements of the *elementary space* of the social identity, and subsequently look for the socio-motivational

dynamic *nucleus*/the identity words which are uncovered through analysis. Each analysis was followed by a summary of the identity.

Those participating in the IMIS phase of the study were living in the San Francisco Bay area or in Greater Los Angeles. One was from Hawaii. A very few were Chinese immigrants living in Paris and provided us with a means of comparison. Participants in this phase of the study included immigrants from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, from Chinese communities in: Vietnam (Cholon), Singapore, Malaysia, Reunion Island, Panama. Other participants were ABCs or ARC's. Ages of participants ranged from 20 to 70 yrs., with the majority in their 40s. Many were middle class or upper middle class professionals, and a very few worked in restaurants or small businesses. A majority of IMIS participants were protestant from evangelical, Baptist or Presbyterian affiliated congregations. Some were from Chinese Methodist or Anglican congregations and some were Catholic from Chinese Catholic Church centers. One participant was baptized, but later became an atheist. This person lives in Hawaii and did have a more problematic identity construction.

a. The Identity words (or nuclei) which appear in the cultural sphere of the identity

When we organize the cultural sphere identity words along general lines we obtain the following categories:

1. Work (*hard-working*) , *career orientation*
2. *Family-oriented/ social/relational*
3. Oriented towards *humanity* in the sense of *respect, consideration, kindness, generosity*

In this cultural sphere, 2 to 4 identity words appear most often or are most often used by the participant in his/her representations. In general these words are from the domain of “Career orientation” or “Work”. These are often cited by Chinese from the States. The Chinese in Paris also referred to career or work and their IMIS and focus groups were used as a means of comparison with the US groups. Following analysis, we uncovered 9 identity nuclei or words that fall into the category of “Family” or “Social/relational orientation” both from Chinese in the States and 6 from Chinese in Paris. For the category of Humanity/Oriented toward respect of the Other (of Alter), we find 7 identity nuclei or words from participants in the States and 4 from those in France. In the cultural sphere we also found that the notion of “Education” was quite important (in terms of scholarship and in terms of moral education/values): 7 of these nuclei concerned participants in the States and 4 those in France). The fifth major category is that of “Responsibility” (3 US) and “Adaptation” (2 US, 2 France). Other categories of identity words for the cultural sphere of the identity include: *tradition, seriousness, privilege*. Certain ABCs also include categories such as *liberty and creativity*. These seem to reflect a certain adaptation to notions quite present in the wider

American society. The family (including the extended family of the church) and its inherent affective relationships is paramount in this sphere of the identity.

The IMIS results reinforce data collected in the focus groups. Chinese American Christians seem to cherish aspects of traditional Chinese culture (all present in Confucian precepts): Their identity nuclei include words such as: *work, career, family/people-oriented, sociability, humanity, kindness, respect, consideration*. These particular categories are also in keeping with Christian precepts (found in the Beatitudes, Psalms, Proverbs, etc.) Family orientation here (according to the representations analyzed and their images) seems to be related to the notion of filial piety (*xiao*). This concept is similar to the concept of filial piety in the Old and New Testament (we refer to *Ecclesiasticus* in the Catholic Bible and to St. Paul's emphasis on honoring parents in the book of *Ephesians*.) In the Biblical parable of the Good Samaritan, for example, the message taught is that each person should treat others (the injured, the sick, the marginalized, the poor, the lonely, the neighbor, in a way in which he “loves his neighbor as himself”). The participant thus seeks to love the other (Alter) as he would a brother or sister through a praxis of love which seems in some ways similar to the Confucian notion of “*ren*, although it is particularly Christian. Kindness, attention paid to others, respect for others, consideration were all present in the identity words, as they were evident in focus group interactions, and in Christian teaching and praxis in the Chinese church as per participant discourse. We note that the often-mentioned *ren-ai* is paramount in this phase of the study as it was in focus group discourse. ABC's in the ethnic church also preferred some “American-type” notions, but were also more oriented toward: profound relationships, a respectful way of treating others, as well as career success. Warmth in the relationship and respect were perhaps less evident in the group dynamic, although determining this would require further study.

b. Identity words (the *nucleus* of the identity) appearing in the moral/emotional sphere of the identity

The identity words for the moral/emotional sphere of the identity fall into the following categories:

1. People-oriented/warm relationships. Following analysis, the participant nuclei include the following identity words: *kind, accepting, respectful, tolerant, empathetic, treat people equally*, etc.
2. Oriented towards love through gift of self. The participants' identity nuclei include the following: *sharing, comforting others, helpfulness*, etc.)
3. Moral orientation. The respondents nuclei: *honest, responsible, principled, Biblical ethics, good*.

The majority of the identity words fall into two main categories. “Humane/People oriented/warm relationships” appeared often for Chinese from the States, and 3 such words for Chinese in France. We then have 13 words which fall into the category *Love/Gift of self/ sharing* for Chinese in the States, with 3 of these identity words coming from Chinese in France. For the notion of “moral orientation”, 8 identity words come from participants in the States and 3 from those in France. In fourth position, we find the notion of *Trust/Stability/Peace*. Peace is often interpreted in terms of harmony, though it involves the transcendent Christian aspect apparent in the notion of *having peace with God*. (5 words from the US and 3 from France). In fifth position we find the notion of loyalty (7 from the US) and the notion of *Pardon/Mercy* (5 US) and that of *Satisfaction/Gratitude* (3 US, 1 France).

A very few profiles showed the following words in the moral/emotional sphere: *bittersweet feeling, seeking self-awareness, fragile-lonely, compromising, comparisons between people, impassive, non-emotional* (and a *feeling of insecurity* was present in one profile) We note that the most important aspects in this sphere are those related to *humanity* and to *love, gift of self*. There is a Christian notion of love which carries aspects of the Confucian respect found in the “*ren*”, in concert with axiological or moral vision of life. Christian and Confucian notions seems to exist in concert and in “harmony” in this identity.

The immanent or temporal horizon is not the only one for participants. There is a certain distance which has developed with the original religion or atheistic outlook held prior to conversion. The socio-motivational *nucleus*, the person's ideal and values allow them to develop a new identity which differs in some aspects from the former identity. This new identity, according to the IMIS analysis, is a way for participants to acquire peace and harmony as well as, affective and familial fulfillment. The church *family* becomes an extended one for the immigrant as it well may be for the ABC in a pan-Asian congregation. All participants state that they are *accepted and loved by God*. This divine *acceptance* allows the participant to minimize any experience of stigmatization in spite of stresses encountered in the immigration and adaptation process. Again, the identity dynamic for Chinese American Christians according to IMIS analysis, seems to be centered on belief in Christ, peace, harmony (despite difficulties experiences prior to immigration and the linguistic difficulties etc. that one experiences upon arrival to the States). These difficulties are perhaps exacerbated by the individualistic orientation of American life, but are minimized in the Chinese Christian church. These cultural obstacles reinforce the participants in their desire to develop profound, spiritual relationships (both transcendent/vertical and horizontal/social). Both the preliminary questionnaire and IMIS analysis show prototypical models that participants integrate into their own identities (for

example: pastors, priests, other Chinese Christians, models from Scripture, parents, spouses, missionaries, etc.) These reinforce their socio-motivational project for their future lives. In all cases, these identity prototypes contribute to what appears to be a solid identity construction.

The Chinese Christian identity permits participants in the study to keep affective bonds with their cultural community through the ethnic church. However the community really becomes an *extended family*, as well as a part of the family in a spiritual sense (reflecting the *family relationship* as is found in the Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit). This *family* ideal is at the heart of Christianity as it is also very present in Confucian precepts. However, in the Chinese Christian family, there does not appear to be a rigid hierarchy as might exist in a Confucian family. The family ideal in this sense seems to be instrumental in what participants see as the *harmonization* of these two aspects of their cultural and moral/emotional spheres. Recoding has not allowed us to determine any extremism and there do not seem to be any polarized or distressed identities. Most all participant representations note faithfulness to those Chinese *Confucian* family values which converge with Christian notions and praxis. Respect for others is palpable, as is a fundamental respect for women. Respect for women seems to have its source in Christian praxis. Excesses are rejected and many participants seem to be apolitical. The sometimes mentioned representations including the following notions: *free, freedom, free will* were iterated in concert with the images of: freedom from selfishness, from individualism, from sin etc. This may indicate a desire for adaptation, for liberty, as well as for religious freedom. It may indicate the importance of the notion of a responsible freedom or liberty as is present in Christian thought.

Fundamental to the identity are harmonious interpersonal relationships in conjunction with deep transcendent or vertical relationships with God. Carsun Chang has illustrated these relationships with the phrase *Tienren heyi (harmony between heaven and earth)*. These relationships are founded on respect, trust, help for others, etc. and participants note them as being conducive to the peace and well-being of the person. The Multistad Investigator of Social Identity (IMIS) was a method which allowed us to better understand the relationship between the different spheres of the identity, the identity dynamic underlying the conversion process, and the basic construction of the CCCI. Exploration of the deeper thinking underlying participant representations allowed us to see how Christian relationship and Chinese (Confucian) values are linked to the personal biography. Analysis of the representations helped in understanding the importance of relationships in the church and the deeper meaning behind the relationships through examination of the internal operating environment

of the participant. In this way, we hoped to understand the essence of the identity.⁵⁶ *This transdisciplinary method is a bridge between disciplines such as sociology, social psychology, etc. and thus allows one to better understand the complexity of the phenomenon studied with greater perspicacity... The process is qualitative, and in this sense is up-to-date. The subject takes up the most important role in the study, in that he is the actor of his own identity construction. Through this paradigm, by giving the subject a voice, one allows the implicit meaning to emerge and this allows for the comprehension of the identity dynamic... IMIS allows one to grasp (the identity's essence), and explain subtle identity mechanisms which have been elucidated through individual processes in their interaction with the social environment in an 'objective' fashion*⁵⁷.

The identity word or *socio-motivational nucleus* of the identity is an element of social cohesion. The Multistad Investigator of Social Identity (IMIS) shows us how existential and social/emotional motivation is embedded in the subjective environment of Chinese *Confucian* Christians in America. Our participants are socially engaged persons who mediate adaptation and *harmony* for their extended *Christian families* in that they are at a key juncture where the wider society's attitudes and prejudices can be changed through their example. This seems to hold true despite possible difficulties that might be experienced with the language, and during the adaptation process in general. The example given is one of harmony through the actualization of the *ren-ai* as it is described by participants. This family, social, and vertical harmony (with God) seem to bring about integration through a type of *inner peace* which is forged in the nucleus of the identity. The socio-motivational *nucleus* of the identity shows us that the central identity of the participants becomes the basis for the praxis of the Christian faith, the base which causes certain Chinese cultural aspects of the identity to move to the periphery. The Confucian notion of the *gentleman* seems to be important, however in the convergence between Confucian and Christian notions. It is not a dysfunctional syncretism, but rather, a harmonious *blending* which is observed in this study of CCC identity construction.

VIII. SYNTHESIS OF PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS AND FOCUS ON IDENTITY WORDS AND CONCEPTS FOUND IN THE IDENTITY "NUCLEUS"/CONCLUSIONS

Concepts found in *blended* religious identity constructions

The French philosopher Simone Weil (1909-1943), when searching for *Truth* in Christian scriptures and Christian theologians' works, also read widely of Asian religions and philosophies. In

⁵⁶ Through subjective, social reality: Martinez, 1999 p. 308

her reading of the Baghavad Gita and of Zen (Chan) buddhism, Weil seemed to see certain religious concepts found in Asia as being useful to understanding truths which can help the person in his search for *Revelationary Truth*.⁵⁸ In similar fashion, we have sought to examine Confucian thought in ways that it might converge with or open up a path toward Christian revelation. Confucian thought, for example, seems to tend towards theism in its classical form⁵⁹. For many Chinese American Christian immigrants⁶⁰ the concept of a transcendent God, or Shangdi, is present in ancient Chinese culture in *Classics* such as the *Odes* and the *Documents*, and in the rites of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, rites Confucius sought to promulgate. This was brought out in the focus groups, and in interviews with seminary students and professors (for example, some at a theological seminary in the LA area). For Julia Ching,⁶¹ a form of pragmatic rationalism developed following the death of Confucius. It was at that point, that the theist concept of Shangdi was weakened. This lack of a theist concept of God in later Confucianism is what some participants in the study mentioned as being a reason as to why they felt drawn to the Christian *Shangdi* or *Tienzhu*. (The theist concept being important to them as it implies a personal, transcendent relationship). Some seem to suggest that they revitalize Chinese culture, return to their familial or ancestral roots (the *gen*) and find social and personal fulfillment in the development of the CCC identity.⁶²

Axiology seemed to be lived out in the lives (identities) of the participants through the notion of *ren* (humanity). This *ren* in conjunction with the notion of love in Christianity, God in Christ and the theist aspect of Chinese thought exemplified in the transcendent Shangdi found in the *Odes*, is what many Chinese American immigrants felt was essential for the spiritual renewal of the soul and the revitalization of humanity in our globalized world. Indication of renewal can be discovered through convergence of Confucian and Christian concepts as they are outlined by Peter Chen Main Wong (cf Vermandeer):

Concepts such as: xiao (filial piety), ren and Christian love, the relationship between tian (heaven) and man as expressed in tiandao (the way of heaven) and rendao (the way of man), similarities between Christian meditation and zen, between fuxing (the restoration of nature) and devotion. (There is) cultural adaptation in the Catholic liturgy following mass during the Chinese New Year, respect paid to ancestors where flowers, incense, and

57 Martinez *ibid.* p.309

58 *Cahiers*, volumes I-IV in *Simone Weil: Oeuvres complètes*, Tome VI, Gallimard, Paris 1994-2006

59 Ching, Julia: *Confucianism and Christianity*

60 Yang Fenggang, *Chinese Christians in North America, Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999, p.7.

61 Ching, Julia: *Confucianism and Christianity*

62 This was mentioned by respondents to the open-ended questions section of the preliminary questionnaire phase of the study undertaken for the doctoral dissertation (Daban, Mary; *Harmonie, Identité, Pragmatisme: Chinois Chrétiens en Amérique du Nord*, Université de Pau, 2003)

wine are incorporated into the rite, or in the Catholic funeral rites (where one prays to God to welcome the souls of the departed).⁶³

IX. CCCI AND FILIAL PIETY

In phase one (preliminary questionnaire) and phase two (focus groups) of this study, we noted how Chinese pastors, priests, scholars, and parishoners in North America defined the notion of *xiao* (filial piety) as it is integrated within the wider church family and into the concrete practices of church members. Participants perceived family values and respect for elders as aspects of both Confucianism and Christianity which were not only compatible but necessary for the actualization of this identity. Respondants mentioned that these values or notions were acted out in practice through: loyalty in the family setting, service toward others in the church and in the wider community, family interdependence, honoring parents through actions, humility, less emphasis on the self. This responsiveness to the elder, to other members of the family, to church members, to the neighbor in general, was mentioned as being an important aspect of filial piety as present in the CCC identity.

One member of a focus group mentioned that: *We are born in God and we will return to the center of God's world.* This way of linking the paternity of God to the return to our origin evokes the Dao as described in Laozi but also evokes the Confucian notion of *xiao* (filial piety). For participants, the *zhongshu* (fidelity and forgiveness) as present in the church family/community when linked with Christian Principles (*dao*) shows forth the *gen* (root): *I found this root in my life. Based on this root, I can grow and receive peace and tranquility. I do not need to wander looking for anything else.*⁶⁴ This representation is Confucian, yet Christian and evokes the parable of the prodigal son's return to the Father.

X. CCCI AND EDUCATION

Questionnaire respondents also mentioned the importance of education in the construction of their identity. Some saw higher education (masters or PhD level) as being as important for a Confucian as for a Christian in that one strives to understand, to search, to learn. Teachers are highly respected by those of CCC identity in North America, as they are in Chinese culture. Education was also

63 Cf: Benoît Vermandeer: *Les Mandariniers de la Rivière Huai*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 2002

found to be related to moral education and values such as kindness, gentleness, humility, modesty, and sound moral teaching were seen as being essential to the identities of the communities polled.⁶⁵ Many of the respondents had a socio-motivational project⁶⁶ which involved education, but whose center was actually the *ren* or *ren-ai* (love) as it is experienced in the ethnic Church (the *nucleus* of the CCCI). The *Tianxia* or vertical transcendent relationship was acted out in a practical way through the close relationships and kindness shared in the church.

This vertical transcendent relationship leads immigrants to baptism:

*Recently, many from the PRC have been baptized. They state that they come to church because of the love they experience here and because it's like a small family. They aren't afraid here and trust those in the church. Now that they are here in the US, they aren't afraid of being spied on, it's easier to come to church. They say that they find that many Americans have been positively influenced by Christianity. These new church members appreciate the feeling of equality of help, and the feeling of being valued as persons.*⁶⁷

The primordial moral education was an important factor in participant praxis at work and in the family (as was shown in phase 1 answers to questions 9,10,11.) The socio-motivational project of participants was actualized in their every-day relationships according to the representations given. Participants spoke of values and behavior which included: being gentle, humble, showing good-will toward others responsibility: 1. “*Responsibility, not cheating*”, 2. “*Helpfulness to patients when at work*”, 3. “*After being a Christian, I enjoy everything more from nature and [that which is] traditional than from man-made, esp. I don’t like TV.*”, 4. “*I used to be the kind of professional who rises head and shoulders above others, but after becoming a Christian, I became a professional who is serving people*”. 5. “*I pay close attention to serving the poor and the marginalized.*”

Participant behavior showed changed behavior and a moral education as well as a Christian approach to various situations: 1. “*In times of stress and conflict, it helps to see things in a different perspective*”, 2. “*I try to apply Christ’s teaching to my job, treat people fairly and love the people around me at work.*”, 3. “*Work more diligently*”, 4. “*It helps me to maintain a sense of fairness and if conflicts arise, I have standards to go by.*” 5. “*Thinking, way of life, philosophy, ethics, morality.*” 6. “*Ask God for guidance in my job, be helpful and honest in my job environment*”.

64 Daban, Ibid., p. 348-355

65 Daban, Ibid. p. 348-355

66 Zavalloni, Ibid.

The notion of respect was frequently mentioned in participant representations: *“I believe we should respect others' free will and world views. If they ask me, I will explain to them my faith, but I never attempt to impose it on them.”*

Respect and harmony are again, quite frequent themes we discovered throughout this study (in the cultural sphere (work/education) and in the moral/emotional (relational) sphere:

1. *“(Christ)Makes my life much happier, gives me inner peace”*. 2. *“My family is more lovely, more peaceful.”*, 3. *“We accept each other more and are more considerate to each other.”*, 4. *“We pray together and for each other during difficult times.”* 5. *“Be a good mother, daughter, wife”* (harmony, respect, love, filial piety).

XI. CCCI AND TIAN (HEAVEN), PHILOSOPHY, REVELATION

According to a participant in a CCC focus group in the LA area, Confucius received his mandate from heaven in order to teach virtue and was thus inspired by *Tian* (heaven). Confucius' reference to Heaven seems to equate heaven with God and in this sense, *Tian* refers to a supreme being and is open to a transcendent interpretation⁶⁸. A bishop from San Francisco confirms this in saying that for the Chinese American Christian, Christ completes natural philosophy and Confucian ethics:

Philosophy opens one's horizons. But in terms of the love of God, of inner peace, of self-sacrifice, of forgiveness of sins, natural philosophy does not go far enough. Relation as it is found in the natural sphere (natural process) does not really satisfy. Natural philosophy should go as far as God but Confucianism and Buddhism stop prior to reaching God. Confucius says that moral truth can be known, but he doesn't always seem certain of the truth... (Christianity) gives direction to one's conscience. Its science and knowledge (in the Church) inform the conscience and give security.

For a CCC seminary students' focus group: *Christ completes Chinese culture, He completes Confucian teaching in much the same way as he completes the Old Testament. Classical proverbs are part of general revelation, but are not as complete as in the Biblical canon.* Another focus group, one quite different from the above was composed of young professionals (teachers, doctors, nurses) in the LA area. Their reasoning was, however, quite similar: *Chinese cultural values resemble Christian values, but we don't know the reasoning behind Chinese values. Christianity*

67 Chinese Methodist pastor in the Los Angeles basin (section on Focus Groups in Daban, *ibid.*, p. 372-398)

68 Also see thesis in Julia Ching's work: *Confucianism and Christianity*

(through revelation) gives us the reasoning behind them. According to a large majority of the focus groups this revelation must include the spiritual life in order to be effective in the new blended identity:

*I received good teaching. I was a disciple of Confucius (in Taiwan) when I was younger. However, we also need the spiritual life, not only moral teaching. Kindness, happiness, self-control come from the spiritual life and are actualized through prayer. God gives us the love to put these values into practice.*⁶⁹

For a Chinese university professor and researcher in one of the focus groups (San Francisco), a parallel exists between Confucian thought and Jewish thought that is completed in the teaching of the Beatitudes:

I believe that God revealed himself in Chinese culture and that this revelation is God, the God of all. Jewish understanding is similar to the Confucian understanding of God. The Chinese are practical as are the Jews. Greek philosophers thought of love in terms of different levels, but the Jews think in practical terms. It is close to the Chinese way of thinking. We don't think of loving Jesus in an abstract way. We compare: 'You love me more than something else?' That's how Christ asked Peter, ? Do you love me more than these? Chinese do not like the doctrine of the Trinity or how to prove the existence of God; theological questions. They are interested in practical life: sin, forgiveness, love.

How to live a long time and have a healthy life (practical questions) had its answer in Taoism. How to live without sadness, without desire had its answer in Buddhism. Chinese like religious questions in practical terms. That is why Psalm 23 is so popular in China as are the 10 Commandments and the Beatitudes...

XII. CCCI AND RESPECT, GIVING, CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS, AND *REN-AI* (LOVE) BRING ABOUT HARMONY

This particular creole or blended identity is interesting in that it seems to combine many aspects of Confucianism while at the same time, the *nucleus* or socio-motivational center is altered somewhat. The socio-motivational *nucleus* for participants was no longer Confucian thought or Chinese culture per say, but rather: faith in Christ combined with actualization of the person through: gift of self, love, warm relationships with others, etc. Love (*ren-ai*) was often interpreted in terms of respect and self-sacrifice when helping and caring for others. The cultural components became somewhat

69 Daban Ibid., p. 348-355

more peripheral.⁷⁰

There was also the notion of free will which contrasts with the Buddhist/Hindu concept of karma. A CCC nun in the San Francisco Bay Area who helps immigrants adjust to life in the States mentioned that *For the Catholic, it is a question of free will. One accepts to become a child of God, it isn't forced. I believe that many become Catholic because there is the idea of free will.* This identity was also compared with certain aspects of the wider American culture.

Christian life is different from American individualism. I find greater harmony and peace in the Church. The Church is a family larger than our families which are also important to us. Here we share amongst each other. I find comfort, strength, spiritual and emotional support here.

A Los Angeles participant mentioned that this notion of love and warm human relationships also entails the idea of respect: *Because of the violence and suffering in Asia, we are more respectful of God. We treat Him as Lord and Divine, less as a friend (Western way of seeing God). God is judge/just, but He is love.* This **Ren-ai** (love: filial, familial, spiritual) is practiced through *xin* (heart, mercy, kindness, support), *xu* (compassion). It indicates respect, interdependence, generosity, hospitality, consideration, and acceptance of others. This *nucleus* was the basis for the actualization of the other identity spheres : *Xiao* (filial piety) leads to Harmony between Heaven and human beings (*TianDao*) and *Rendao* (harmony between people). Participants mention that this leads in turn to inner harmony (psycho-social equilibrium). The great respect for others found in Chinese culture and especially in Chinese Christianity also leads to harmony and peace.⁷¹

The idea of filial piety in terms of vertical relationship with God opens up the identity to transcendence embodying not only the personal nature of the *Shangdi* found in the *Odes*, but one actualized in Biblical revelation as has been shown in participant representations and focus group discussions.

XIII. CONCLUSION

As we have seen from CCC discourse, many immigrants or transnationals in Chinese communities in North America have overcome stress related to social adaptation or discrimination with an ingenious paradigm for identity construction. This particular identity (Chinese Christian Confucian Identity or CCCI) provides participants with a paradigm for holistic and spiritual *family* identity

70 Daban, Ibid. p. 396-460

construction and also shows some convergence of Christian concepts with Confucian notions such as: *Xiao* (filial piety), *Tian* (heaven) and *Ren* or *Ren-ai* (love and respect). This convergence has allowed members of Chinese American Christian churches to build a framework for self-actualization. The *nucleus* or socio-motivational center for this identity is in fact the *Ren* or *Ren-ai*. As mentioned in the above synthesis, the *ren-ai* is an identity word embedded in the construction of the identity and uncovered through IMIS (Multistad Investigator of Social Identity) analysis. Only 7 of the 34 IMIS subjects showed any binary opposition, frustration, or a need for defense mechanisms. They showed overall integration in their identities according to our analysis. The identities analyzed did not show signs of distress. 26 showed contiguity between the representations which seems to indicate that they are *harmonious* or *sound* identities.

The identity *nucleus* or *socio-motivational center* (Zavalloni, 1984 Martinez, 1999) consists of *identity words* which emerge through analysis of the social microcosms, cultural spheres, and moral emotional spheres of the IMIS participants. The *Ren-ai* as analysed in the CCC identity is *humanity* in the Confucian sense, but is more than that, in that it is also comprised of the love of Christ and of others in the Christian sense. It indicates the presence of respect, and implies warm relationships. The *ren-ai* also involves the giving of self. This study did not compare love or *ren-ai* as it is found in White, Black or Hispanic Christian identities, though it seems that it is most likely central to the Christian identity, and could possibly be a *nucleus* or *socio-motivational center* for White, Black, or Hispanic Christian identities.

Analysis done in the three phases of this study does not necessarily show a contentious unity at the heart of the identity. As the IMIS analysis indicates, the identity generally tends toward harmony and inner peace. Chen (2008) notes that in becoming Christian, the Chinese person becomes American. We find that, although the participants' American identities are in part mediated through the ethnic church, they also differ significantly from a certain form of individualism found in the wider American society. It is truly a *blended* identity with a different type of nucleus. In the analysis of CCCI IMIS social microcosms, cultural and moral/emotional spheres: we see that the *Ren-ai* is put into praxis (actualized) through helpfulness and kindness toward others, hospitality, generosity and mercy/compassion shown by the participants in the study as per their representations⁷². The value of the *person* is strongly emphasized and is different from the concept

71 CCC Catholic nun from San Francisco

72 I refer again here to the sample of the analysis of the moral emotional sphere of one IMIS participant's identity given as an example. This identity is particularly representative of the 27 out of 34 participants who all showed relatively integrated identities. I feel again that even those who did show use of defense mechanisms due to severe stress also showed relatively integrated identities.

of the individual or what some term *American individualism*. Inner harmony or *psycho-social equilibrium* is achieved through the *gift of self*, through constructive relationships. The CCC personally seeks to find intimacy with *Tianzhu/Shangdi* (God) through the *Ren-agape* in order to bring about effective peace and joy. The CCCI participants in this study seek to create harmony in society (By bringing *peace* to others), harmony in our globalized world (by bringing people the love of Christ as they seek to help others find personal relationships with *Shangdi/Tianzhu*). They also seek to cultivate inner and universal harmony. *Tianren heyi* was a term used by some participants to denote: *harmony between God and man*. The CCCI seeks in some ways to revitalize the theism and humanity found in the Chinese culture of the *Classics*, return to familial or ancestral roots (the *gen*) and find social and personal fulfillment through the extended Christian *family* and a transcendent relationship with God. Analysis of CCC social microcosms, cultural spheres, and contiguity in the moral emotional sphere seems to indicate a very positive and a very sound identity construction.

APPENDICES

Note: Names of participants in the study and names of churches participants are affiliated with have been altered in order to preserve confidentiality.

I. Analysis of the Moral/Emotional sphere from a Catholic IMIS subject, a lady from mainland China. 34 IMIS subjects were analyzed in the original dissertation

Moral emotional sphere for Subject N?11, Ms. Li: Kind/Loving

Self +	Non self +
<u>Chinese/ Guandong province:</u> family-oriented, happy, respectful, sincere,	
<u>Woman:</u> care about the family , caring people,	
<u>Middle aged:</u> love to learn , seek to improve life's conditions, counsels others , helps accompany others <u>Catholics:</u> generous,	
<u>Social worker:</u> helpful , resourceful , caring , loving	
<u>Dedicated religious:</u> kind, generous, committed, peace-loving	
<u>Characteristics:</u> kind, patient, loving (trying) selfless,	

Self -

Interestingly, no negative representations of the self were given, though this was not the case for most participants

Non Self -

(without marked binary opposition between the Self + and the Non self): Power-seekers, controlling, selfish, unkind

Analysis of the moral/emotional sphere

The humane, moral, and relational aspects emerge as central elements in the identity dynamic of this subject (please note the above representations in the quadrant self+). The spiritual relationship of this subject (centered on the Christ) is a primary motivating factor in both her personal and community relationships where she seeks to help, give to, and love others. We did not note any frustrations in the identity of this subject, despite the fact that she has gone through some difficult circumstances. She has remained optimistic, open, kind, and loving. In this sphere, we see the importance of practicing kindness, of being loving in relationships with those whom she counsels regarding marriage, work, and family issues. The following identity words emerged through analysis: kind, loving (a synthesis of the images behind the representations concerning relationships.)

Identity words of subject N?11: Kind/Loving (Sub-groups: Self, people in her church, other religious, other social friends) workers in her circle of

Self-concept

family-oriented , happy, respectful sincere, care about the family , caring people, love to learn seek to improve life's conditions, counsels others , helps accompany others ,generous, helpful , resourceful , caring , loving kind, generous, committed, peace-loving kind, patient, loving (trying) selfless, kind, sensitive to people's needs, available

Attitudes

Actually, God created us for a unique and different purposes, it's how we respond to the gifts that are created by Him. In other words, it's our individual relationship with God. As a family we also respect our parents. Just compare this to the commandments 'obey your father and mother', a good link to the Chinese culture. But there is respect, not slavery, not superstition. I'm not for that, but it's mutual and you know God always loves us but it's mutual, you should love God too, We still have a sense of belonging to the group and to God, to the Church. That is deeper than just because I

need housing. Free will is the individual interpretation, it is your relationship with God. Nobody can judge. That means you go to church on Sunday, not because you have to go, but you're going

to spend one hour with God in a special way. You love someone, you always like to be with that person. In practicing centering prayer we choose a word, I choose Christ, to be Christ centered. Sometimes some emphasize too much the Blessed Virgin, I'm not for that. If you want to go to the Son, you go to the Mother first, I agree thoroughly, but our center should be Christ because God sent Christ to us for that. I'm a very different Catholic. because I worked in the Philippines, a lot of processions and things are centered on the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Rosary. is overemphasized. I say, where is God? where is Christ? but Christ is still the centering. I am a very practical person because I am also a social worker, not so idealistic. The majority of Chinese Catholics are practical people; they like to see how Christianity helps you in your daily life. That's why there is great value (importance) put on the family (for Catholics) .You look at the early Christians, how they loved one another. If groups are divided among themselves, argue and bicker, that's no use, they do not love each other, how can they call themselves Christians? (re: Catholic/Protestant conflict in Ireland)

Kind/Loving

Biography

But for Catholics, God still allows us to have free will. Free will to accept or not to accept. Although we have the privilege to be called the children of God, but if you do not accept, that is your own free will. No one will force you. But for Chinese culture, once you were born that way, you have no way to overcome that. In my own opinion, the concept of free will is what attracts people to become Catholic.

Values

Both Chinese cultural and Christian values are important to pass on to our children. Why I've converted from Buddhist to Christian to Catholic is because that they are very similar. Buddhists also preach about peace, about harmony, about being at peace with heaven and earth and with ourselves, Catholics also challenge us with these. Sometimes people say, 'but buddhism is not as active , although they begin to build temples, schools, hospitals, etc Buddhism is still not complete, not exactly complete because I feel that Christ completes. Other values: Free will, (Unconditional) love

Summary

Psychosocial analysis of Ms. Li's identity spheres displays themes such as the value of being and of loving. These themes are in close relationship with the religious convictions of the subject and refer to daily interpersonal relationships that she has with those in the church community and in the wider society. We estimate that this subject has found equilibrium and harmony and becomes loving and kind through actualization in the identity spheres. This is evident in the socio-motivational *nucleus* which emerges. The subject is happy, and at peace. We did not find any manifestation of frustration, or of distress in the identity. We found a very good integration of the social identity.

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